

MESSAGE ON "THY SEED"
Given on Christmas Devotions on
Good Samaritan TV Channel 3
by Willis E. Bishop
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Genesis 22 is the story of God's command to Abraham to offer up Isaac, and Abraham, in obedience, makes his way with Isaac to Mount Moriah to follow the command of the Lord. And then the Lord provides in place of Isaac a ram, which is used for the sacrifice. When we finish with that account, though it's in the same context, the Angel of the Lord calls to Abraham a second time out of heaven.

"And the angel said, By myself I have sworn, says the Lord. Because you have done this and have not withheld thy son, thine only son, in blessing I will bless thee and in multiplying I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." Verse 18: "And in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

The Apostle Paul interprets that verse for us in Galatians 3:16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say, And to seeds, referring to many, but referring to one, And to your seed, who is Christ." In other words, when God made that promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 22:18, He was thinking about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing He would be to the nations.

I don't know whether you've tried to trace your ancestry or not. I've tried it a little bit because for a number of years I lived next door to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. But I gave up on that -- that's quite a job. Our son has done a little more study on that and even traveled to Pennsylvania and other places to check on some of our ancestry. You don't know Mabel, do you? But Mabel used to sit in our living room and talk for hours about her ancestry and do it from memory. And I guess it's possible for us to simply start where we are and trace backward to where we came from. But I want to remind you that the promise God made to Abraham here is not tracing backward, but He's looking forward with the promise. There's nothing miraculous about tracing something backward, for that has already happened. But looking forward and fulfilling a promise is something else, for this meant to Abraham that into his life there would be born at least one son who would grow to age and be married and have at least one son who would grow to age and be married and have at least one son, until the Messiah came.

Now Abraham lived two thousand years before Christ, which means that that promise down through the years to Isaac and to Jacob and to Joseph and to David and to Solomon and so on was all a matter of keeping this promise alive that God had made to Abraham. At first blush that doesn't seem to be too difficult. But when we stop and think about it, it really is except that God is in it.

I have copied a part of Abraham Lincoln's history, and I want to read a part of that this morning to show you the principle that lies back of the promise made to Abraham.

Abraham Lincoln had four children, Robert Todd, Edward Baker, William Wallace, and Thomas. Of these four children, one died in infancy, one died in youth, and one died in early manhood before marriage. The only one of President Lincoln's children to marry was Robert Todd, who had three children -- two daughters, Mary and Jessie Harlan and one son, Abraham, who died at about age 17 before marriage. So that the direct male descendency from Abraham Lincoln became extinct in three generations. There's no one living today who can claim to be a direct descendant of Abraham Lincoln through the male line. It ceased in three generations. But God continued in the line of Abraham for two thousand years to bring forth at least one male child who would have a son who would have a son who would have a son until Mary brought forth her firstborn son and laid Him in the manger at Bethlehem.

No wonder our Lord Himself in John 8:56 said, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, this morning we thank You that in the fullness of time the seed of Abraham came, that He was laid in a manger and Heaven broke its silence with rejoicing, and that that One who came was named Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. In this Christmas season, we pray that our hearts shall rejoice anew and anew and anew at the wonderful provision that Thou hast made for us. We pray that as we approach this time of the year we shall be mindful of our need of continually walking before Thee in holiness and in love, that we may know day by day the forgiveness of our sins and the assurance of our salvation. We pray for the tasks that You have put before us today, that You will enable us to carry them out to the glory of our Lord and Saviour, and for the problems that we face, whether they be physical, emotional, financial, spiritual, or whatever, that we may find in the Babe of Bethlehem the refuge and the strength that we need to face life as it is placed before us.

We pray for our village today, for each one that is here and for those newcomers who have come and those who will yet come, that, Lord, we may make this a place where the presence of Christ is felt. Grant that we may be obedient to the rules, that we may cheerfully abide by that which is laid upon us, and that we may be known as those who know and love the Lord. And for those, Lord, who move in who have never named the name of Christ, that they may sense that there is something different about those who have had their sins forgiven and their face toward Heaven.

We pray for Mr. Paulson [the village administrator] this morning and for the other leaders that they may be given a wisdom that is above their own in order to care for this place, to make decisions that will fully honor the Lord Jesus Christ. We do

thank You for this place and pray that Thou wilt guard it and care for it and protect it in a wonderful way.

And then, Lord, we're mindful, too, of a world that's lost in sin. We've sent missionaries out and we pray for them -- we pray that You'll help us to support them and that You will also be pleased to thrust out others who are willing to lend their lives to the promotion of the Word of God.

So grant, our Father, as we go into this day, knowing afresh the forgiveness of our sins, that the joy of the Lord may be upon us, for we come and ask it in the name of the Seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.